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poured into the veins of society at large. But where indifference and scepticism flourish, there faith and fervor are kindled anew. Hence the imperishable benefit of religious reforms. Therefore the debates between Luther and Zwingli and all the differences between the Protestant sects have not been without influence on their life and vigor. Christianity, in contrast to Paganism and Hebraism, has brought about the regeneration and the life of society solely in this way: by means of Christ, it has opened, in a manner at once explicit and dialectical, the most intense of conflicts that have ever arisen—the inextinguishable conflict between matter and spirit, between the human and the divine.

RAFFAELE MARIANO.

UNIVERSITY OF NAPLES.

[NOTE.—A reply to the foregoing article, by Monsignor Satolli, Papal Ablegate to the United States, will be published in the next number.—MANAGING EDITOR.]

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## DISCUSSIONS.

### THE MEANING OF "MOTIVE."

IN writing a word of reply to Mr. Ritchie's criticism (in the October number) upon the meaning I attach to motive, I wish to be as short as possible. I find myself so much in sympathy with his view of the nature of motive and with his published opinions on matters of joint interest, that I should much regret it if I hereby created the impression in the mind of any reader of the *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ETHICS* that there was any important difference of principle between us. I should merely like to say,—

I. That the passage quoted by him on p. 56 of the "*Elements of Ethics*" must not be taken to imply that the "idea of an end" can "move" in the sense which would entitle it to rank as a motive except in so far as it is interesting,—*i.e.*, felt. I think I have made it sufficiently obvious in the neighboring sections that I regard feeling as an essential element in all desire and therefore in motive.

2. It would not have been supposed that I made this mistake if it had been noted that the passage quoted occurs in juxtaposition with an attempted analysis of desire, in which the elements of thought and feeling are distinguished from one another and the opinion hazarded that it is better to confine the word motive, as distinguished from desire, to the *ideal* side of *effective* desire.

3. I admit that this is to narrow the use of the word which in common language sometimes denotes (a) the effective rather than the ideal side of desire, as when we say that Macbeth's motive in murdering Duncan was ambition,—*i.e.*, the *feeling* of interest awakened in him by the thought of the crown. (b) Any one of several competing feelings or ideas, as when we speak of a "conflict of motives." But, while making this admission, I still claim, first, that motive is an aspect of desire and ought not in strict language to be taken as simply equivalent to it, and, secondly, that in giving it this sense I am more in harmony with current usage than Mr. Ritchie, who seems to identify motive and desire. He writes, "Whatever else a motive is, it is a desire." On the contrary, I should say, Whatever else a motive is, it is not desire pure and simple. Mr. Ritchie may say I am here refining upon words, but then—he began it.

There is, indeed, a further question suggested by Mr. Ritchie's remarks which is more than one of nomenclature, and which I should like to see opened up before this discussion is allowed to drop. I mean the question, What is the precise nature of each of the two elements of feeling and of thought or idea which we are all agreed go to constitute desire? How does each react upon the other? and how does it operate or co-operate in the result? Whatever differences there may be as to the use of names, I do not anticipate that Mr. Ritchie's answer to this question, or group of questions, would differ in any important respect from my own. Whether Mr. Alexander's boycott of my use of "final cause," as applied to the idea of the end or object of an action, conceals more fundamental differences remains to be seen. Meantime, however, lest this new issue which is only indirectly raised

obscure the present question, I reserve what I have to say upon it for a future occasion.

J. H. MUIRHEAD.

LONDON.

On the general merits of this controversy I have not much to add to what Mr. Muirhead has said.\* I certainly had no intention, any more than Mr. Muirhead, of implying that a motive could be effective without feeling. All conscious activity involves feeling, but feeling (in the sense of pleasure and pain) is never, I think, the complete inner explanation of conscious activity.† We have always to inquire, further, what is the source of the feeling. This may be either a blind impulse or the consciousness of some end. In the latter case alone is it properly described as a motive. It was this point that I wished to emphasize, and on this point I understand that Mr. Ritchie is in complete agreement. As to the use of the terms efficient and final cause to describe this difference, I readily admit that this involves some violation of the Aristotelian sense of these terms,—a violation, however, which seems to me to be inevitable in the modern use of the expressions. I took efficient cause as meaning simply the antecedent change on which a movement depends. This would, in some cases,

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\* I ought perhaps to note, however, that Mr. Muirhead's use of the term "motive" does not exactly coincide with mine. He confines it to the ideal element in an *effective* desire; whereas I have thought it preferable not to introduce this limitation. I admit that there is some advantage in restricting the meaning of the word as Mr. Muirhead (like Green) has done. But it seems to me to involve too great a violation of ordinary usage, and to deprive us of any convenient mode of describing the important fact known as "conflict of motives."

† This point will, no doubt, be further discussed in the Note which Mr. Muirhead promises. I may content myself with saying here that the habit which some psychologists have of speaking of feeling as the cause of action, seems to imply an unreal division between the different elements in a conscious state. It is to be regretted that Dr. James Ward, who, in his article on "Psychology" in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, has done so much to break down this false division, yet seems frequently to permit himself to speak as if the different aspects of a conscious state could be separated from one another and regarded as, respectively, cause and effect. This idea has been a fruitful source of error in psychology and ethics.

be the action of nerves, muscles, etc.; in other cases it would be an appetite; in other cases it would be the presence of the desire for some object. All these are impelling or antecedent causes; and every action is dependent upon such antecedents, whether it is a motivated action or one dependent on mere impulse. If it is a motivated action, the motive is undoubtedly included in this antecedent, and it is only in this way that a motive can become operative. It is in this way that final causes act. A house is not built by its final cause, except in so far as this pre-exists as an idea in the mind of the builder, impelling him to act in a particular way. Thus, in a sense, the final cause is included in the efficient cause. But the important point is that in explaining some conscious acts we simply look back. Why did this man commit a murder? He was carried away by passion. Here the passion is simply regarded as preceding the act and leading on to it.\* On the other hand, there are cases in which we feel bound to look forward for an explanation. Why did Columbus cross the Atlantic? He hoped to discover land. This hope also preceded his action; but this antecedent has reference to an anticipated consequent. Now some writers would use the term motive in both these cases. They would say that anger and hope are both motives. My view, on the other hand, is that neither of these should be described as a motive. They are both merely efficient or antecedent causes, but the latter of the two *involves* a motive,—*i.e.*, a final cause. The motive is not the hope, but the object as hoped. I admit, of course, that in ordinary usage the term is often used in such a way as to include anger and hope and the like. But if we were to include these in the scientific use of the term, it would be necessary, I think, to include also mere animal impulses, and this would be very inconvenient. Moreover, I think the ordinary usage of the term (and still more of the corresponding terms *motif*, *Motiv*, *motiviren*, etc.) tends to be limited to cases in which some definite end is proposed.

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\* How far it can rightly be so regarded, in the case of any human action, I cannot here discuss.

In the passage which Mr. Ritchie quotes from Bancroft ("The conversion of the heathen was the motive to the settlement"), I admit that the expression is somewhat elliptical; but I do not think that the omission is quite accurately supplied by saying, as Mr. Ritchie suggests, "The *desire* or *wish* to convert the heathen was the motive." It would, I think, be better to say, "The conversion of the heathen, regarded as an object of desire, was the motive," or, "The idea (or purpose) of the conversion of the heathen was the motive." So, also, in the passage which Mr. Ritchie quotes from my "Manual of Ethics," instead of saying, "The final cause is the desire of reaching a certain destination," it would have been more accurate to say, "The final cause is the reaching of a certain destination, regarded as an object of desire," or, "The final cause is the idea (or purpose) of reaching." A motive or final cause is not, I think, correctly described either as a desire or as a future event, but rather as a future event regarded as an object of desire. In this particular passage, therefore, I think Mr. Ritchie has convicted me of an inaccuracy\* in expression, which I much regret.†

J. S. MACKENZIE.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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I agree with Mr. Ritchie that "when we speak of a person's motives we generally mean the feelings which influence his conduct, and not simply the ends or objects of his action,

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\* In defence of my use of the term, however, it may be urged that the word "desire" is sometimes employed in this way,—*e.g.*, when we say that a man has gained his desire. In fact, there seems to be no single English word to express an object of desire. But I admit that "desire" ought not, without due warning, to be used for the object of desire.

† It is interesting to note that Dr. Simmel, in his recent "Einleitung in die Moralwissenschaft," appears to be in substantial agreement with the view of motives which Mr. Muirhead and myself have adopted. See especially Vol. I., pp. 307, 308, where he distinguishes between "die teleologischen *Motive*" and "die blossen *Ursachen*." It is gratifying to find such a point of agreement with one who is so keen a critic and whose general point of view is so different from ours.

apart from their mental existence as constituting the content of his feelings," and I think it desirable to limit the word, for scientific purposes, to this sense. Such motives are what Dr. Martineau calls "springs of action." I believe that Mill is right in saying that motives, so understood, make no difference to the morality of conduct, so long as they do not alter the intention. Different persons may perform the same conduct in consequence of quite different motives; therefore the motive cannot be that by which the conduct is judged. I am, of course, far from asserting that the motive does not "throw light on character." Plainly, there are long odds that a man will act virtuously if his motives are such as when left to themselves issue in good actions. But the question is whether the motive (though possessing *moral* significance) is *ethically* (*i.e.*, for the science of morals) a satisfactory test of either conduct or character. This I deny. By character we understand not merely habitual disposition, but effective disposition. A man may be habitually kind-hearted and shrink instinctively from hurting the feelings of others, but this may lead him into acts of culpable tenderness, and we should consider him so far a blamable character. It was on this ground that I held Mill's statement to be slightly inaccurate.

Mr. Ritchie appears to me to understand motive not, according to his definition, as equivalent to the feelings which influence conduct, but to the feelings which are decisive of conduct. In the case supposed, if the man acts wrongly, his motive was unwillingness to hurt a friend's feelings; if he acts rightly, his motive was, say, a sense of duty. But the operative feeling (supposing that it is feeling which operates) is neither in the one case the kindness, nor in the other the sense of duty, but one or other of these feelings as directed upon the particular object,—*i.e.*, as guided by the intention. I venture to call this complex state the active sentiment. This is what Mr. Ritchie calls the "spirit of the action." The expression is a loose one. If Mr. Ritchie means that the spirit of the action consists entirely of feelings, then, since the motive in its final form is determined by the idea of the end, the moral judgment still is passed on the ground of this idea,—that is, of

the intention. If, as I suppose, he means by the spirit of the action a complex of feelings and ideas, then this is nothing more nor less than the whole volition taken along with its elements of feeling, or considered especially in connection with its elements of feeling. No doubt such a motive is the true subject of moral judgment, but then it is identical with the conduct.

On the other hand, if Mr. Ritchie thinks his motive, so analyzed, to be the efficient cause of conduct, he lays himself open to an objection like one which he urges against Mr. Mackenzie. His motive is the efficient cause, not of conduct, but of the mere external action. It is part of the material cause of conduct. We can, in fact, distinguish in the complex whole of conduct two elements: one is the motive—in my sense the feeling—which suggests the action, the other is the mere external act. These are both ethically indifferent. The feeling might have been different and the conduct remain morally the same, or the same good external act might have proceeded from a good or a bad motive. Both the motive and the intention act or may act as efficient causes. But what is judged morally is the volition as a whole, the agent as acting; and the character of his volition is given by the intention.

The difference between Mr. Ritchie and me appears to amount to this. I limit motive to the feeling which suggests an action; he takes motive to be the feeling as modified by the intention,—*i.e.*, what I call the active sentiment. In this he has the support of Professor Sully, who defines motive (*"Outlines of Psychology,"* p. 392, new edition) as "a desire viewed in its relation to a particular represented action, the carrying out of which it urges or prompts." When Mr. Ritchie says that he can speak of "a good man doing a wrong action from good motives," he is clearly using the word motive in my sense, not in his. But the discussion illustrates both the ambiguity of the word and the difficulty of analyzing the thing.

The earlier portion of Mr. Ritchie's article does not affect anything I have said, and I agree with him in his antagonism to the misuse of the term "final cause" in the passages quoted from the writers he criticises; but I should like to observe that even supposing that an action must be caused by a feel-



ing, which it is certainly rash to assert in so unqualified a way at the present moment, I do not see why the representation of the end should not include elements of feeling. So far as I can see, it does, and the intellectual apprehension of the end, its accompanying feeling, and the feelings of the agent not suggested by the represented idea, all combine to produce the active sentiment.

S. ALEXANDER.

LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD.

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The discussion which I have been the means of raising has at least had the good effect of obtaining from Mr. Muirhead and Mr. Mackenzie useful explanatory notes on their ethical text-books, and I am glad to find that the difference between us narrows itself to very little, if anything, more than a difference about the use of a term. I still adhere to my original view that it is most convenient, because most in accordance with ordinary literary use and most in accordance with the previous philosophical history of the term and its Greek antecedents, to take "motive" as equivalent to "a *desire* for an object conceived as a possible end of action." But I do not *identify* "motive" with "desire": "desire" is the genus of which "motive" is a species. The differentia of "motive" is the presence of a conception of an end. I think, however, that it is an inaccuracy of language which is too apt to suggest an error in psychology, to restrict "motive" to the merely intellectual element of the complex mental state. In insisting that motive must include the element of "feeling," I am, of course, using that term in its widest sense, and certainly not restricting it to the feelings of pleasure and pain, which are distinguishable from appetites and emotions, even though they may always accompany them in some degree. In Mr. Mackenzie's illustration of a man murdering another out of passion (*i.e.*, anger), the act may be a foolish one, and may be said to have very slight motives (*cui bono?*), but it cannot rightly be called *unmotivated*. The motive even in such a case contains a conception of an end. The man in anger thinks

of, or pictures, the person he murderously assaults as paying the penalty of the supposed wrong-doing which has caused his (the assailant's) anger. If the act is clearly unmotived, we regard the doer as no longer a rational and responsible being: he is not guilty of "murder" any more than a tiger is.

I think it inconvenient to limit "motive" to the effective desire for an object,—the desire that issues in action. If the term were so limited, "conflict of motives" and "strongest motive"—phrases with a very respectable philosophical history—would be meaningless. Of course, when I speak of *the* motive of some particular act, I mean the motive that has shown itself effective: the defeated motives were merely possible efficient causes that have been counteracted. To talk of "motives" which have not actually "moved" the person to overt actions (though they may have moved him *towards* them) is permissible, just as it is to talk of "causes" that have been counteracted.

In all phraseology about causes a certain amount of abstraction is inevitable. The term "efficient cause" loses its meaning altogether if "cause" be taken strictly as the sum total of the conditions of an act or event. In the sense in which Mr. Alexander uses "conduct," the conduct includes all the psychical conditions of overt action, but in ordinary use conduct is distinguished from character. Conduct means "a course of action." (It generally means more than a particular act, and so I think Mr. Alexander a little overstates Mill's view by substituting "conduct" for "act.") A man of generally good character may do several bad acts, which might be described as bad conduct. When we say a man may do a wrong act from a good motive, we mean that the act is of *such a kind* as we consider socially mischievous, while the motives are of *such a kind* as we commend. Most usually in such cases the motives are mixed,—*e.g.*, in the case Mr. Alexander suggests, desire to do a kind action is a good motive, while desire to escape trouble or fear of causing morally necessary pain is a bad motive.

The psychological problem to which Mr. Alexander refers at the end of his reply I cannot here attempt to discuss. In

defence of Aristotle (and myself) I will only say that, so far as my experience goes, a mental image or idea of a movement alone cannot, as a matter of fact, cause me to make that movement; else why does such a mental image or idea so often *deter* me from making the movement? Moral education would be an easier thing than it is if it were only necessary to supply mental pictures of right actions, and not also to mould the feelings. If it be said that ideas have of themselves "an impulsive quality," that is only to use the word "idea" to cover a complex state which contains desire in it.

DAVID G. RITCHIE.

JESUS COLLEGE, OXFORD.

#### PRINCIPLE OF CLASSIFICATION OF RECENT ETHICAL WRITERS.

WITH regard to a criticism made by my reviewer in the July number (Vol. III., pp. 535, 536), I should like to say just a word.

The criticism in question had reference to the principle on which my selection of the authors considered in Part I. of my "Review of Evolutional Ethics" was made. The selection is, as Professor Royce states, a difficult one. Indeed, if "Evolutional Ethics" is to include all writers who have taught the reality of a progressive movement in human society, a work on the subject could scarcely draw a line at any point, since, even if one goes back as far as early Greek philosophy, one finds some recognition of such a movement. Again, it is certainly a fact that our modern distinctively biological theory of evolution has unconsciously affected all modern thought, even where it is not consciously received; so that its influence can often be distinguished even in the works of writers who verbally repudiate it. However, although exact classification is difficult in all cases, and particularly so with regard to thought, of whose evolution we are ourselves the observers, so that no missing links leave us convenient gaps of division; yet, in disagreement with Professor Royce, I am of the opinion that there may be other principles of classification than the one represented by the title "Recent Ethical Idealists." This is not, at least, my title; and in making my selection I endeavored to adhere to the principle involved in the latter—